

***Note - For the second lesson of this module, teachers may choose to hire a post-secondary music student. Please contact the Vancouver Symphony Education Department at education@vancouversymphony.ca for more information.**

Overview

Suggested Audience: Grades 3-6

- Students creatively explore their experiences in different acoustic environments, culminating in a guided outdoor soundwalk.

Essential Understanding

- Students will be guided through a listening framework that explores the boundary of noise and music as a foundation for contemporary music study. They will collect found instruments on a 'Foraging Excursion', participate in a collaborative musical activity, go on a guided outdoor Soundwalk, and reflect on their experiences. Concepts of Acoustic Ecology and Sound Density are introduced.

Links to Core Competencies



Communication

- Acquire, interpret, and present information (includes inquiries)
- Collaborate to plan, carry out, and review constructions and activities



Creative Thinking

- Novelty and value - Students get creative ideas that are both novel and have value. There are degrees of novelty—an idea may be new to that student or it may be new to their peers; it may be novel for their age group, or it may be novel to a larger community.



Critical Thinking

- Develop and design



Social Responsibility

- Building relationships

First Peoples Principles of Learning

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational, (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Big Ideas

- Grade 3: Creative experiences involve an interplay between exploration, inquiry, and purposeful choice.
- Grades 4 & 5: Artists experiment in a variety of ways to discover new possibilities.
- Grade 6: Engaging in creative expression and experiences expands people's sense of identity and community.



Learning Standards

|  Curricular Competencies |  Content |
|---|--|
| <p>Exploring and Creating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create artistic works collaboratively and as an individual, using ideas inspired by imagination, inquiry, experimentation, and purposeful play. • Intentionally select, apply, combine, and arrange artistic elements, processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments in art making. <p>Reasoning and Reflecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on works of art and creative processes to understand artists' intentions. <p>Communicating and Documenting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe, interpret and respond to works of art and explore artists' intent. | <p>Elements in the Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music – texture, dynamics, creating contrast, timbre, form • Symbolism and metaphor to explore ideas and perspective. |

Students will become aware of and experience the following learning standards.

Prelude: Acoustic Ecology and Sound Experiences

Suggested number of lessons: 1-2

- 3-5 mins. Play excerpt from Beethoven's *Symphony No. 6*. Briefly explain the background of the piece, including how long ago it was composed. Ask students to raise their hands when they hear birds. Suggested questions:
 - What birds do you think Beethoven is imitating?
 - Can you name the instruments?

Beethoven, Symphony no. 6 - <https://youtu.be/p4CCU2-AFZE?t=1166>

Ludwig van Beethoven's sixth symphony was composed in 1808 and first performed on December 22nd, 1808. This movement is called 'Pastoral', and depicts a peaceful woodland scene. The flute imitates the sound of a nightingale, the clarinets imitate a cuckoo, and the oboe represents a quail (19:30).

- Introduce the concepts of Acoustic Ecology and Sound Density. Have students brainstorm collectively about what these words could mean.

Acoustic Ecology - Acoustic Ecology is the study of the relationship between people and the sounds in our environment.

Sound Density - Sound Density describes the dimension of musical texture related to how many sounds are happening concurrently. An instance of high sound density would involve many sounds happening together (eg. a symphony orchestra playing a tutti section), and 'low density' would describe an instance of few sounds (eg. a solo voice and guitar).

- Explain Acoustic Ecology (*see teacher's guide to this module*). Ask students to share personal experiences with loud and soft environments; create a list of different 'Acoustic

Environments/'Soundscapes' - a list that extends to the wide range of environments encountered in British Columbia.

- Journal using one of the following prompts:
 - Choose a place from the list. What sounds would you expect to hear?
 - Recall a time when you were in a very loud or quiet place. What sounds do you remember hearing? How did these sounds make you feel?

Prelude cont.: Foraging Excursion and Soundwalk Priming Activity

- Explain to students that instruments can be found in nature, and that you will be going outside to collect objects to be used as instruments. Suggest or invite students to suggest some potential objects - sticks, stones, and pinecones would make great percussive instruments.
- Lead an outdoor excursion to find and collect instruments.
 - *Tips for Success - consider providing gloves, bags, or paper towels to collect and contain instruments.*
- Once students have all collected their instruments, find a place outdoors quiet enough that everyone can be heard, and form a circle. Have students demonstrate their instruments and explain why they chose them. Once all students have had a chance to share, recall the concept of Acoustic Ecology from the previous lesson. As a priming activity for the upcoming Soundwalk, lead **Guiding Activity 1** from the Soundwalking Guide that accompanies this module.

Guiding Activity 1

- Try to stand as still as possible. Listen closely; what sounds can you hear your body making?
- Now, try to move your arm without making any sound. Try to take a step forward. Is it possible?
- Once again standing still, **turn your attention to the environment**. What sounds do you hear? What's the loudest? The fastest, the softest, the slowest, etc.?
- Explain to students that the sounds we make contribute to the sounds in our environment.

Exploring Sounds and Sound Density in Composition - Post-Secondary Music Student OR Teacher

- *5 mins.* [PSMS] Briefly introduce yourself and your musical background. Reinforce Acoustic Ecology by asking about previous class(es). Students may be asked to share their journal topics.
- *3-5 mins.* Play excerpt from Respighi's *Pines of Rome*.
 - Ask students to raise their hands when they hear the birds. Explain that Respighi used phonograph recordings of actual birds, which had never been used in orchestral music before.

Respighi, Pines of Rome - <https://youtu.be/mdve48nptNk?t=924>

Ottorino Respighi's 'Pines of Rome' was completed in 1924, and premiered in December that same year in Rome. This movement depicts the full moon shining on a temple on a hill. To create the sound of the nightingale, Respighi requires the orchestra to use actual phonograph recordings of birds!

- *5 mins.* Play excerpt from Westerkamp's *Talking Rain*. Explain background of piece, identifying the composer and the fact that it was recorded in Vancouver. Have students identify how the music changes over time. What sounds can be heard besides rain?

Westerkamp, Talking Rain - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZF88yrK5Gg>

*Hildegard Westerkamp is a Vancouver composer, radio artist, and sound ecologist. She often composes using recordings from her environment of nature, people, and technology. She studies and teaches the concept of **sound ecology**. *Talking Rain* features actual recordings from around Vancouver in 1997. To show instances of different texture, use (1:00-3:00, 4:40-5:40, & 9:45-10:15) from the linked recording.*

- *30 mins.* Ask students to get their 'instruments'. Collaborate with students to create a class composition using the composition worksheet provided (see also: "Leading Composition Activity" in *Teacher Guide to this module*).
 - Students may use their instruments, body percussion, or a combination.
 - Begin with a discussion of the terms in the "Texture and Form Bank" and the musical symbols in the "Music Bank". Explore what these could sound like, and invite students to expand on these by creating their own symbols and terms.
 - You may decide to group students into 'sections'.
 - Determine signals for 'louder', 'softer', 'faster', 'slower', etc.
 - Once the concept has been established, appoint a student conductor.
 - Optional: divide class into small groups and have students create their own compositions using the Composition Template. Practice performing these before you hold your outdoor concert in the next lesson.

Guided Soundwalk – Teacher

Suggested number of lessons - 1

- Take class on an outdoor 15-20 minute soundwalk. Use prompts from 'Teacher's Guide: Soundwalking'. Ensure students bring their instruments and composition sheets.
- After your Soundwalk, choose a place outdoors to perform your class composition and/or a selected student composition. Record so that class can listen back to it together!
 - *Optional: host performance inside if weather is not conducive.*

Closure – Teacher

- Have students self-reflect and discuss the experience. Discuss:
 - Which sounds did you anticipate hearing on the soundwalk? Were any of the sounds unexpected?
 - Can you recreate any of the sounds you heard?

- As a class, watch or listen to the performance of your composition. After, invite students to discuss or journal about what they heard in both pieces, relating it to soundscape listening, and also to the elements of density, speed, volume, and pitch.

Assessment Strategies

- Create a journal entry that discusses learned content from soundwalk.

Feedback Forms

Please complete the attached Student and Teacher Feedback Forms and send to education@vancouverSymphony.ca. The information we receive will help us improve and refine the program for future implementations. Optional: send us the recordings of your compositions—we would love to hear them!

Suggested Resources

Music

- Beethoven, Symphony No. 6: <https://youtu.be/p4CCU2-AFZE?t=1166>
- Respighi, Pines of Rome: <https://youtu.be/mdve48nptNk?t=924>
- Westerkamp, Talking Rain: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZF88yrK5Gg>